

Message Text

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ACTION OES-03

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EB-06 FEAE-00 FPC-01 H-02 INR-07 INT-05 L-02 NSAE-00

NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-03 RSC-01 SAM-01 SP-02 SS-15 STR-04

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R 220943Z OCT 74

FM AMEMBASSY OSLO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8870

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 3 OSLO 4718

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: TPHY TGEN NO

SUBJ: PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION ON GLOMAR CHALLENGER

REF: OSLO 4706

THERE FOLLOWS A TRANSLATION OF THE TEXTS OF THE QUESTION
ASKED IN PARLIAMENT ABOUT THE ACTIVITIES OF THE GLOMAR
CHALLENGER ON THE VORING PLATEAU AND OF THE ANSWER OF
MINISTER OF INDUSTRY ULVESETH.

QUESTION

"IS IT CORRECT THAT THE DRILLING SHIP GLOMAR CHALLENGER
HAS CONDUCTED SCIENTIFIC DRILLINGS WITHOUT AUTHORIZATION
FROM THE GOVERNMENT ON THE NORWEGIAN CONTINENTAL SHELF,
WEST OF THE LOFOTENS ON THE SO-CALLED VORINGEN PLATEAU,
AND THAT OIL WAS ACCIDENTALLY DISCOVERED DURING THIS
DRILLING?"

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ANSWER

THE ACT OF JUNE 21, 1963 CONCERNING SCIENTIFIC INVESTIGATION OF AND EXPLOITATION OF UNDERWATER NATURAL RESOURCES, APPLIES AS FAR OUT AS THE OCEAN DEPTHS PERMIT EXPLOITATION OF THE NATURAL RESOURCES. THIS IS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE GENEVA CONVENTION OF 1958 GOVERNING THE CONTINENTAL SHELF.

UNDER THIS CONVENTION, COASTAL STATES HAVE SOVEREIGN RIGHTS TO THE NATURAL RESOURCES ON THE SEABED AND THE SUBSOIL OF THE SUBMARINE AREAS. THE GENEVA CONVENTION OF 1958 ALSO CONTAINS RULES APPLYING TO SCIENTIFIC INVESTIGATIONS. CHAPTER 5, SECTION 8 OF THE CONVENTION SAYS:

8. THE CONSENT OF THE COASTAL STATE SHALL BE OBTAINED IN RESPECT OF ANY RESEARCH CONCERNING THE CONTINENTAL SHELF AND UNDERTAKEN THERE. NEVERTHELESS THE COASTAL STATE SHALL NOT NORMALLY WITHHOLD ITS CONSENT IF THE REQUEST IS SUBMITTED BY A QUALIFIED INSTITUTION WITH A VIEW TO PURELY SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH INTO THE PHYSICAL OR BIOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CONTINENTAL SHELF, SUBJECT TO THE PROVISIO THAT THE COASTAL STATE SHALL HAVE THE RIGHT, IF IT SO DESIRES, TO PARTICIPATE OR TO BE REPRESENTED IN THE RESEARCH, AND THAT IN ANY EVENT THE RESULTS SHALL BE PUBLISHED.

THE CONVENTION HAS BEEN RATIFIED BY BOTH NORWAY AND THE UNITED STATES.

NORWEGIAN RULES GOVERNING SCIENTIFIC INVESTIGATIONS, SET DOWN IN ROYAL DECREE OF JANUARY 31, 1969, REQUIRE CONSENT OF THE NORWEGIAN GOVERNMENT BEFORE SUCH INVESTIGATIONS CAN BEGIN.

UP UNTIL TODAY CONSENT HAS BEEN GIVEN FOR 54 SCIENTIFIC INVESTIGATIONS, NONE OF THEM ON THE VORING PLATEAU. THESE PERMISSIONS FIRST AND FOREMOST COVERED GEOPHYSICAL MEASUREMENTS, BUT IN SOME INSTANCES CONSENT WAS ALSO UNCLASSIFIED

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GIVEN TO THE TAKING OF SEABED SAMPLES, AND TO DRILL INTO THE OCEAN FLOOR TO A MAXIMUM DEPTH OF 25 METERS.

IN A LETTER OF APRIL 2, 1974 FROM THE NORSK POLAR-INSTITUTT, THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY AND THE STATE OIL DIRECTORATE WERE BRIEFED ABOUT PLANS FOR MAKING ONE DRILLINGS IN THE BARENTS SEA BETWEEN BEAR ISLAND (BJORNOYA) AND FINNMARK. THE HOLE WAS TO BE DRILLED

BY "GLOMAR CHALLENGER."

LATER THE OIL DIRECTORATE RECEIVED A LETTER DATED APRIL 23, 1974, FROM FIVE NORWEGIAN SCIENTISTS IN WHICH PERMISSION WAS REQUESTED FOR THE "GLOMAR CHALLENGER" TO DRILL FOUR HOLES ON THE VORING PLATEAU, IN ADDITION TO THE ONE IN THE BARENTS SEA, AND ON THE SAME CONDITIONS AS THOSE OBTAINED FOR SCIENTIFIC INVESTIGATIONS OF THE NORWEGIAN CONTINENTAL SHELF. THE QUESTION WAS ALSO DISCUSSED WITH THE NORWEGIAN RESEARCHERS IN THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY AND IN THE OIL DIRECTORATE.

THE EXPEDITION WAS TO BE FINANCED BY THE NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION, A WELL KNOWN AND HIGHLY REPUTED AMERICAN SCIENTIFIC INSTITUTION, AND WOULD BE CARRIED OUT BY "THE DEEP SEA DRILLING PROJECT." THE PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT WAS TO OBTAIN ROCK SAMPLES FROM THE SEABED ON GREAT DEPTHS. THE DRILLING SHIP "GLOMAR CHALLENGER" IS ESPECIALLY BUILT FOR THIS PURPOSE AND HAS SPECIAL EQUIPMENT FOR CORE DRILLING ON MAJOR DEPTHS. BUT IT DOES NOT HAVE THE NECESSARY EQUIPMENT TO PREVENT A BLOW-OUT, SHOULD THE EXPEDITION HIT OIL OR GAS UNDER HEAVY PRESSURE. IT IS BEYOND DOUBT THE PROJECT ENJOYS THE HIGHEST RESPECT AMONG SCIENTISTS THE WORLD OVER. THE PROJECT IS UNDER THE DIRECTION OF, AND RECEIVES FINANCIAL SUPPORT FROM, FIVE AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS. IT ALSO RECEIVES FINANCIAL SUPPORT FROM THE SOVIET UNION AND FROM WEST GERMANY.

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R 220943Z OCT 74
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8871
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IN THE REQUEST FROM THE FIVE NORWEGIAN SCIENTISTS
IT WAS MADE QUITE CLEAR THAT THE NATIONAL SCIENCE
FOUNDATION WOULD NOT PERMIT DRILLINGS TO BE MADE IN
PLACES WHERE THE NATIONS CONCERNED MIGHT OBJECT.
THUS, THE HOLE IN THE BARENTS SEA WOULD NOT BE DRILLED
UNLESS NORWEGIAN SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS
AND THE GOVERNMENT STRONGLY SUPPORTED IT. AND UNLESS
THE ABOVE TOOK A FRIENDLY VIEW, THERE WOULD ALSO BE
MADE NO DRILLING AT THE VORING PLATEAU.

BECAUSE OF THE OIL-POLITICAL ASPECTS OF THE CASE, THE
OIL DIRECTORATE ASKED THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY FOR ITS
EVALUATION BEFORE A FINAL POSITION WAS TAKEN WITH REGARD
TO THE PROJECT. AFTER HAVING CONFERRED WITH THE FOREIGN
MINISTRY, THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY IN A LETTER OF
JULY 3, 1974 INFORMED THE OIL DIRECTORATE THAT IT COULD
NOT ADVISE THAT CONSENT BE GIVEN IN RESPECT OF THE
DRILLINGS FOR WHICH APPLICATIONS HAD BEEN MADE. THE
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MINISTRY'S LETTER SAYS, IN PART:

"THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY ALSO WISHES TO STATE
THAT THE PLANNED DRILLINGS WOULD BE THE VERY
FIRST MADE IN THIS AREA. THE PLACING OF THE
HOLES HAVE NOT BEEN MADE WITH A VIEW TOWARD OIL
PROSPECTING, BUT THE MINISTRY ASSUMES THAT THE
VERY FACT THAT DRILLINGS ARE MADE IN THIS AREA
MIGHT HAVE CONSIDERABLE POLITICAL RAMIFICATIONS.
THE STORTING'S HANDLING OF ST. MELD (STORTING
REPORT) NO. 30 ENTAILS THAT THE AUTHORITIES,
WHEN ISSUING PERMISSIONS TO MINE MUST SERIOUSLY
CONSIDER A NUMBER OF DIFFERENT FACTORS PERTAINING
TO FISHERIES, ECONOMY AND FOREIGN POLICY, IN
ADDITION TO APPRAISALS OF WHICH AREAS WOULD BE
SUITABLE FOR RECEIVING SUCH PERMISSIONS FROM
A PETROLEUM-PROSPECTING POINT OF VIEW."

IN A LETTER OF JULY 9, 1974 TO THE NORSK POLARINSTITUTT, WITH COPIES TO TWO OF THE NORWEGIAN SCIENTISTS WHO HAD TAKEN THE INITIATIVE IN MAKING THE APPLICATION, THE OIL DIRECTORATE NOTIFIED THAT IT COULD NOT CONSENT TO THE CARRYING OUT OF THE PLANNED DRILLINGS. THE LETTER UNDERScoreD THAT NEITHER ACCORDING TO THE RESOLUTION OF JANUARY 31, 1969 GOVERNING SCIENTIFIC SEARCH FOR NATURAL RESOURCES ON THE NORWEGIAN CONTINENTAL SHELF, ETC., NOT ACCORDING TO THE RESOLUTION OF DECEMBER 8, 1972 CONCERNING THE SEARCH FOR AND MINING OF UNDERWATER PETROLEUM SOURCES, COULD PERMISSION NORMALLY BE GRANTED FOR DRILLING IN CONNECTION WITH A PERMISSION TO CONDUCT SCIENTIFIC INVESTIGATIONS.

UNFORTUNATELY, THE LETTER OF REFUSAL WAS NOT FORWARDED BY THE NORSK POLARINSTITUTT TO THE PERSONS IN CHARGE OF THE PROJECT. NOT UNTIL ONE MONTH AFTER THE LETTER OF REFUSAL HAD BEEN ISSUED, WAS IT FORWARDED, ON AUGUST 9, TO THE CONTACT-MAN FOR THE NORWEGIAN SCIENTISTS. BUT THE LETTER DID NOT REACH THE ADDRESSEE UNTIL SEVERAL WEEKS LATER.

NOT UNTIL OCTOBER 2 WAS THE OIL DIRECTORATE NOTIFIED
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THAT "GLOMAR CHALLENGER" HAD CONDUCTED DRILLINGS ON THE NORWEGIAN CONTINENTAL SHELF DURING ITS SUMMER CRUISE.

LAST WEEK REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MINISTRY MET WITH TWO OF THE SCIENTISTS WHO HAD TAKEN PART IN THE CRUISE, WITH THE PROJECT LEADER, DR. PETERSON, AND WITH THE FIVE NORWEGIAN SCIENTISTS WHO HAD APPROACHED THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY AND THE OIL DIRECTORATE. PARTICIPATING IN THE CRUISE WERE 12 SCIENTISTS FROM THE UNITED STATES, THE SOVIET UNION, GREAT BRITAIN, WEST GERMANY AND NORWAY -- THREE OF WHOM WERE ATTACHED TO AMERICAN AND BRITISH OIL COMPANIES.

IT HAS NOW BEEN ESTABLISHED THAT FROM AUGUST 15 TO 22, 1974 FIVE HOLES WERE DRILLED IN THE NORTH-EASTERN PART OF THE VORING PLATEAU, IN AN AREA DEFINED BY 67 DEGREES 12 MINUTES AND 67 DEGREES 57 MINUTES NORTHERN LATITUDE 4 DEGREES 55 MINUTES AND 6 DEGREES 18 MINUTES EASTERN LONGITUDES. THE DISTANCE FROM LAND WAS BETWEEN 130 AND 162 NAUTICAL MILES. OCEAN DEPTH RANGED FROM 1206 TO 1439 METERS, AND THE HOLES WERE DRILLED BETWEEN 105 AND 456 METERS INTO THE SEABED.

IN ADDITION, 3 HOLES WERE DRILLED IN THE JAN MAYEN RIDGE FROM SEPTEMBER 6 TO 16. THESE DRILLINGS WERE

MADE BETWEEN 65 AND 100 NAUTICAL MILES SOUTH OF JAN
MAYEN. OCEAN DEPTH RANGED FROM 732 TO 915 METERS,
AND THE HOLES WERE DRILLED FROM 187 TO 320 METERS INTO
THE SEABED. ANOTHER FIVE HOLES WERE DRILLED ON MAJOR
DEPTHS OUTSIDE THE VORING PLATEAU, SVALBARD AND
JANMAYEN.

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IN ONE OF THE HOLES DRILLED AT THE VORING PLATEAU, TRACES
OF HYDROCARBONS WERE FOUND. THE HOLE, DRILLED AT AN
OCEAN DEPTH OF 1439 METERS, 133 NAUTICAL MILES OFF LAND,
WAS THEN 456 METERS DEEP AND HAD A DIAMETER OF APPROX-
IMATELY 25 CM. ACCORDING TO PLAN THIS HOLE WAS TO
HAVE BEEN DRILLED TO DEPTH OF 1000 METERS, BUT BE-
CAUSE OF THE HYDROCARBON CONTENT, THE DRILLING WAS DIS-
CONTINUED AND THE HOLE WAS PLUGGED WITH A 100 METER LONG
CEMENT PLUG AND A 356 METER LONG BARIUM OXIDE PLUG ON
TOP OF THE CEMENT PLUG. THE PLUGGING WAS MADE BY
PUMPING CEMENT AND BARIUM OXIDE INTO THE HOLE AS THE
DRILL ROD WAS LIFTED. ACCORDING TO AVAILABLE INFORMA-

TION, THE PLUGGING WAS DONE IN A SATISFACTORY MANNER FROM A PURELY SAFETY POINT OF VIEW. AS FOR THE TRACES OF OIL WHICH HAD BEEN REPORTED, THEY WERE TOO SMALL TO FORM A BASIS FOR AN ASSESSMENT OF THE AREA'S OIL POTENTIAL.

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THE OCEAN DEPTHS OF THE VORING PLATEAU AND NEAR JAN MAYEN WHERE THE DRILLINGS WERE MADE, WERE NOT SUFFICIENTLY GREAT TO PROHIBIT EXPLOITATION OF THE NATURAL RESOURCES ON OR UNDER THE SEABED.

THE NORWEGIAN GOVERNMENT'S CONCLUSION IS, THEREFORE, THAT THE INVESTIGATIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN CONDUCTED ON THE VORING PLATEAU AND NEAR JAN MAYEN WERE CONDUCTED ON THE NORWEGIAN CONTINENTAL SHELF.

IT IS, THEREFORE, VERY REGRETTABLE THAT THESE DRILLINGS WERE CONDUCTED WITHOUT PRIOR CONSENT HAVING BEEN OBTAINED. EVEN THOUGH THE OIL DIRECTORATE'S LETTER OF REFUSAL, DATED JULY 9, 1974, DID NOT REACH THE PERSONS IN CHARGE OF THE "GLOMAR CHALLENGER'S" "DEEP SEA DRILLING PROJECT," THEY MUST HAVE BEEN AWARE THAT PERMISSION FROM THE NORWEGIAN GOVERNMENT WAS REQUIRED AND THAT DRILLING WITHOUT SUCH PERMISSION WAS NOT TOLERABLE. (X) HERE I WOULD LIKE TO POINT OUT THAT

(X) NOTE: THE CONNOTATION OF THE WORD FORSONLIG IN THIS CONTEXT IS UNCLEAR. THE WORDS THAT COME CLOSEST, AND ARE IN LINE WITH THE REST OF THE TEXT, ARE INTOLERABLE AND UNACCEPTABLE.

LEADERS OF AMERICAN RESEARCH PROJECTS IN RECENT YEAR FREQUENTLY HAVE BEEN IN CONTACT WITH NORWEGIAN SCIENTISTS, AND THAT ONE OF THE LEADERS OF EXPEDITIONS IN 1972 AND 1973, REPRESENTING THE INSTITUTIONS WHICH SUPPORTED THE "DEEP SEA DRILLING PROJECT," (FINANCIALLY) HAVE APPLIED FOR AND RECEIVED PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT CERTAIN GEO-PHYSICAL INVESTIGATIONS AT THE VORING PLATEAU, AMONG OTHER PLACES. IN OUR OPINION, THIS CASE IS ESPECIALLY SERIOUS BECAUSE THE EXPEDITION DID NOT HAVE THE NECESSARY EQUIPMENT TO GUARD AGAINST POSSIBLE BLOWOUTS.

THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY WILL TAKE THE MATTER UP WITH THE PERSONS IN CHARGE OF THE EXPEDITION, AND IT MAY ALSO ASK THE FOREIGN MINISTRY TO STUDY THE
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CASE TO DETERMINE WHETHER IT SHOULD BE BROUGHT UP
WITH THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT.

IN CONCLUSION I WILL JUST BRIEFLY NOTE THAT THIS
CASE RAISES THE QUESTION WHETHER WE HAVE AN
EFFECTIVE SURVEILLANCE OF THE NORWEGIAN CONTINENTAL
SHELF. THIS ENTIRE ISSUE WILL BE STUDIED BY A
COMMITTEE WHICH WAS SET DOWN BY THE GOVERNMENT LAST
FALL, THE SO-CALLED STOLTENBERG COMMITTEE. ITS
REPORT WILL PROBABLY BE READY IN 1975.
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